

Appl. No. 10/086,976
Amendment filed December 4, 2003
Response to Office Action mailed August 12, 2003.

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A counter for pills and capsules comprising:
- (a) a housing comprising a first end and a second end and at least one chamber;
 - (b) a movable plate positioned within the chamber and dividing the chamber into upper and lower sections, the plate movable from a first position to a second position, the plate having a plurality of apertures;
 - (c) at least one sizing guide, the sizing guide having a plurality of apertures, the sizing guide removably fitting within the chamber and substantially aligned with and vertically displaced from the movable plate; and
 - (d) a wall extending upward from a bottom of the housing between the first and second ends; wherein when the movable plate is in the first position, the moveable plate extends from the first end of the housing but does not reach the second end of the housing, and the moveable plate, the wall, and the housing enclose at least part of the lower section of the chamber; wherein when the moveable plate is in the first position the apertures in the plate and the apertures in the sizing guide are out of register, and when the plate is in the second position, the apertures in the plate and in the sizing guide are in register.
2. (previously presented) The counter of claim 1 further comprising at least one removable divider adapted to fit within the upper section of the chamber to separate a portion of the sizing guide apertures corresponding to the desired number of pills or capsules to be counted.

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3. (previously presented) The counter of claim 1 comprising multiple sizing guides, wherein each sizing guide has apertures corresponding to a particular sized pill or capsule.

4. (previously presented) The counter of claim 1 wherein the apertures in the movable plate and sizing guide are arranged in the same pattern.

5. (previously presented) The counter of claim 4 wherein the apertures in both the movable plate and sizing guide are arranged in rows of five.

6. (currently amended) The counter of claim 1 wherein the housing comprises first and second troughs divided by [[a]] the wall, the first trough open to the lower section of the chamber and the second trough open to the upper section of the chamber when the movable plate and sizing guides are present.

7. (currently amended) A pill and capsule counting system comprising:

- (a) a housing comprising a first end and a second end and at least one chamber, the housing adapted to receive a plate dividing the chamber into upper and lower sections;
- (b) a plate adapted to be movable from a first position within the chamber to a second position within the chamber, the plate having a plurality of apertures;
- (c) a plurality of sizing guides, the sizing guides having a plurality of apertures corresponding to a particular size of pill or capsule, wherein each sizing guide has a single size of apertures, the sizing guides adapted to removably fit within the chamber in substantial alignment with and vertically displaced from the plate; wherein when the plate is in the first position, the apertures in the plate and the apertures in the sizing guide are out of register, and when the

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plate is in the second position, the apertures in the plate and in the sizing guide are in register; and

(d) a dispensing opening and a separate, adjacent stock collection opening,
wherein the openings are configured to allow simultaneous dispensing of
counted pills or capsules into a vial and returning of excess pills or capsules to
a stock container.

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8. (previously presented) The pill and capsule counting system of claim 7 further comprising at least one divider removably fitting within the upper section of the chamber to separate a region of the chamber corresponding to a desired number of pills or capsules.

9. (new) The pill and capsule counting system of claim 7 further comprising a wall extending upward from a bottom of the housing between the first and second ends, the wall separating the dispensing opening and stock collection opening; wherein when the plate is in the first position, the plate, the wall, and the housing enclose at least part of the lower section of the chamber.

10. (new) The counter of claim 1 further comprising first and second pathways leading from an interior of the housing to an exterior of the housing, the first and second pathways being located on opposite sides of the wall and including fully enclosed openings, wherein the first pathway receives excess pills or capsules and the second pathway receives counted pills or capsules for dispensing.

11. (new) A counter for pills and capsules comprising:

- (a) a housing having a stock collection region and a dispensing region;
- (b) a sorter positioned in the housing such that it divides the housing into upper and lower sections, the sorter having first and second plates with apertures, wherein the first and second plates are vertically displaced from each other and substantially aligned, wherein at least one of the plates is moveable from a

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first position in which the apertures of the first and second plates are out of register, to a second position in which the apertures of the plates are in register;

- (c) a dispensing opening in the dispensing region of the housing;
- (d) a collection opening in the stock collection region of the housing, wherein the dispensing and stock collection regions are in the lower section of the housing and are separated.

12. (new) The counter of claim 11 further comprising a wall separating the dispensing region and the stock collection region.

13. (new) The counter of claim 11 further comprising a barrier pivotally attached to the housing to separate the collection region from the upper section of the housing.

14. (new) The counter of claim 11 comprising multiple first plates, each first plate having apertures corresponding to a different particular sized pill or capsule.

15. (new) The counter of claim 11 further comprising at least one removable divider adapted to fit within the upper section of the chamber to separate a portion of the plate apertures corresponding to the desired number of pills or capsules to be counted.